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CORRESPONDENCE AND REMARKS

UPON

BANCROFT'S HISTORY OF THE NORTHERN CAMPAIGN
OF 1777,

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AND THE CHARACTER OF

MAJOR-GEN. PHILIP SCHUYLER.

BY

GEORGE L.^{ie} SCHUYLER.

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REMARKS AND CORRESPONDENCE.

THE Northern Campaign of 1777, from the importance of its results, has always been a subject of great interest to the student of American history. In England the plan of it was devised by the King, Lord George Germain and General Burgoyne; the latter having returned to England from Canada the preceding year. Its object was to form a junction between the two armies—that in Canada and that under General Howe in New York, which was considered “the speediest mode of quelling the rebellion.”

The army was composed of about 8000 men, admirably appointed. Burgoyne, with the main force, was to proceed by Lake Champlain; a detachment of regulars under St. Leger, and of Tories and Indians under Sir John Johnson, were to enter the Mohawk country, draw the attention of General Schuyler in that direction, attack Fort Stanwix, and, having ravaged the valley of the Mohawk, rejoin Burgoyne at Albany.

It was not, however, until late in June, and after General Burgoyne had actually started upon his expedition, that General Washington was certain of its destination. He did not know that Burgoyne had returned from England with large re-enforcements, and it seemed not improbable that the movement toward Ticonderoga might be a feint, while the main body of the army in Canada should come round by sea, and form a junction with the army under General Howe.

After protracted discussions in Congress as to what should be the relative positions of Schuyler and Gates, the former being in command of the Northern Department, with head-quarters fixed at Albany—the latter posted at Ticonderoga, and claiming to have an independent command, on the 22d of May, General Schuyler was appointed to the command of the whole Northern Department, embracing Ticonderoga, Fort Stanwix, and their dependencies. He reached Albany, from Philadelphia, on the 3d of June. Gates declining to accept the command of Ticonderoga, it was assigned to General St. Clair.

General Schuyler found that "nothing had been done during his absence to improve the means of defense on the frontiers. Nothing, comparatively speaking, to supply Ticonderoga with provisions." He

proceeded at once, with his usual "activity, fervor, and energy," to procure supplies, rouse the committees of Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York to the importance of sending forward their militia, and was on his way to re-enforce St. Clair with about 2000 men, when, on the 7th of July, he received the intelligence that Ticonderoga was evacuated.

The whole country was astounded. So great had been the confidence in the strength of that post, that the wildest rumors circulated with reference to the cause of this disaster. General Schuyler, as commanding the Department, was suspected, and charges of all kinds were heaped upon him, of varying nature. By some he was accused of treason, by others of cowardice, principally because he was not present when the evacuation occurred. It was asserted that he had ordered the heavy cannon to be removed from the fort and smaller ones to be substituted for them. Absurd rumors were circulated, and believed, that the price for his treason was inclosed in balls shot by the enemy into his lines.

It is needless to dwell upon the well-known fact that General Schuyler, by the verdict of a court-martial, by resolutions of Congress, and by the testimony of all historians from that time to this, is acquitted of all

blame for this surrender ; and, until now, of all the imputations growing out of it to which I have referred.

After the evacuation of Ticonderoga and the losses at Hubbardton, General St. Clair was five days wandering, unheard from, through the woods of Vermont, and finally joined General Schuyler at Fort Edward with only "1500 regulars, the militia having all returned to their homes." They were "without tents or artillery—sickness, distress, and desertion prevailing."

From this time, until relieved of his command by General Gates, which was after the defeat of St. Leger and the battle of Bennington, the conduct of the campaign by General Schuyler has met with the unqualified approbation of those who have studied its details or written its history, until the appearance of Mr. Bancroft's ninth volume.

Chancellor Kent says : "The enemy kept pressing upon his advanced posts, but in the midst of unparalleled difficulties his retreat was slow and safe, and every inch of ground disputed."

Speaking of the state of his army, he says : "By the advice of a council of general officers, Schuyler was obliged to let one half of the militia go home, under a promise of the residue to continue for three weeks."

Irving, in describing Washington's admirable foresight at this time, says: "Due credit must also be given to the sagacious counsels and executive energy of Schuyler, who suggested some of the best moves in the campaign, and carried them vigorously into action. Never was Washington more ably and loyally seconded by any of his generals."

Chief-Justice Marshall, in his Life of Washington, says: "In this gloomy state of things no officer could have exerted more diligence and skill than Schuyler." He describes with fervor his proceedings—the impediments thrown in the way of an advance by Burgoyne—the destruction of roads, bridges, and growing crops—the driving away of live stock, and his endeavors to divide the enemy's force by posting troops upon his flanks.

I have thus, generally, referred to these accounts, in order to contrast what has hitherto been the estimate of General Schuyler's conduct and personal attributes in this campaign, with that now given by Mr. Bancroft. He writes as follows:

"Meantime the British were never *harried* by the troops with Schuyler, against whom public opinion was rising. Men reasoned rightly, that, if Ticonderoga was untenable, he should have known it, and given timely

orders for its evacuation ; instead of which, he had been heaping up stores there to the last. To screen his popularity, he insisted that the retreat was made without the least hint from himself, and was 'ill-judged, and not warranted by necessity.' With manly frankness St. Clair assumed the whole responsibility of the praiseworthy act which had saved to the country many of its bravest defenders.

"Schuyler owed his place to his social position—not to military talents. Anxious, and suspected of a want of personal courage, he found everything go ill under his command. To the Continental troops of St. Clair, who were suffering from the loss of their clothes and tents, he was unable to restore confidence ; nor could he rouse the people. The choice for Governor of New York fell on George Clinton ; 'his character,' said Washington to the Council of Safety, 'will make him peculiarly useful at the head of your State.' Schuyler wrote : 'His family and connections do not entitle him to so distinguished pre-eminence.' The aid of Vermont was needed ; Schuyler would never address its Secretary except in his 'private capacity.' There could be no hope of a successful campaign, but with the hearty co-operation of New England ; yet Schuyler gave leave for one half of its militia to go home at

once, and the rest to follow in three weeks, and then called upon Washington to supply their places by troops from the south of Hudson River, saying to his friends that one Southern soldier was worth two from New England.

"On the twenty-second, long before Burgoyne was ready to advance, Schuyler retreated to a position four miles below Fort Edward. Here again he complained of his 'exposure to immediate ruin.' His friends urged him to silence the growing suspicion of his cowardice; he answered: 'If there is a battle, I shall certainly expose myself more than is prudent.' To the New York Council of Safety he wrote on the twenty-fourth: 'I mean to dispute every inch of ground with Burgoyne, and retard his descent as long as possible;' and in less than a week, without disputing anything, he retreated to Saratoga, having his heart set on a position at the junction of the Mohawk and Hudson. The courage of the commander being gone, his officers and his army became spiritless; and, as his only resource, he solicited aid from Washington with unreasoning importunity."

Further on, he says: "All this while Schuyler continued to despond. On the thirteenth of August he could write from Stillwater to Washington: 'We are

obliged to give way and retreat before a vastly superior force, daily increasing in numbers, and which will be doubled if General Burgoyne reaches Albany, which, I apprehend, will be very soon;' and the next day, flying from a shadow cast before him, he moved his army to the first island in the mouth of the Mohawk River. He pitied the man who should succeed him, and accepted the applause of his admirers at Albany for 'the wisdom of his safe retreat.' For all this half-heartedness, the failure of Burgoyne was certain; but the glory of his defeat was reserved for soldiers of Virginia, New York, and New England."

Upon my return from Europe (in December last), I read Mr. Bancroft's volume, and having determined, as far as possible, to confine myself to what I consider personal in this matter, viz. : that General Schuyler's conduct of the campaign was influenced by cowardice, I asked Mr. Bancroft for the authority upon which this view was founded. He sent me the following documents :

*Extract of a letter from Richard Montgomery to Robt. R. Livingston,
dated*

NEW YORK, 3d June, 1775.

"Phil. Schuyler was mentioned to me by Mr. Scot, [for Major-General for New York.] His consequence in the province makes him a fit subject for an important trust, but has he strong nerves? I could wish to have that point well ascertained

with respect to any man so employed."—Livingston Papers, 1775–1777, pp. 31 and 33.

Extract of a letter from Gen. Richard Montgomery, to Gen. Schuyler, dated

August, 1775.

Moving without your orders, I do not like; but, on the other hand, the prevention of the enemy is of the utmost consequence; for if he gets his vessels into the Lake, it is over with us for the present summer. Let me entreat you to follow in a whale boat, leaving some one to bring on the troops and artillery. It will give the men great confidence in your spirit and activity; and how necessary to a general this confidence is, I need not tell you. I most earnestly wish, that this may meet your approbation; and be assured that I have your honor and reputation much at heart.—Sparks' Am. Biography, vol. I., pp. 194–195.

Extract of a letter from Samuel Adams to Richard Henry Lee, dated

PHILADELPHIA, July 15, 1777.

"We have Letters from Genl. Schuyler in the Northern Department giving us an account of the untoward situation of our affairs in that Quarter. I confess it is no more than I expected when he [Schuyler] was again appointed to the command there. You know that it was urg'd by some Gentlemen, that as he had a large interest and powerfull connections in that part of the country, no one could so readily avail himself of supplies for an army there, if wanted upon an emergency, as he could. A most substantial reason why he should have been appointed a Quarter Master or a Commissary. But it seems to have been a prevailing motive to appoint him to the chief command. You have his account in the inclosed News Paper, which leaves us to guess what is become of the Garrison. It is indeed droll enough to see a General not knowing where to find the main Body of his army! Gates is the man of my choice. He is honest and true, and has the art of gaining the Love of his Soldiers, particularly because he is

always present and shares with them in Fatigue and Danger. But Gates has been disgusted! We are hourly expecting to be relieved from this disagreeable state of uncertainty, by a particular account from some person who was near the army, who trusts not to memory altogether, lest some circumstances may be omitted while others are misapprehended."—Papers of Samuel Adams, IV., 912.

Extract of an original copy or draft of a letter from Jay to Schuyler, dated

21st July, 1777.

"A certain gentleman of that board [the New York Council,] whom I need not name, and from whom I do not desire this information should be concealed, is your secret enemy; he professes much respect &c for you; he can't see thro' the business; he wishes you had been nearer to the fort, [Ticonderoga] though he does not doubt your spirit; he thinks we ought to suspend our judgment, and not censure you rashly."—America, 1777, II., 1124.

Gen. Schuyler to John Jay.

MOSES CREEK, July 27, 1777.

DEAR SIR:

General Arnold who is advanced with two Brigades of Continental troops, and the militia of the county of Albany, about two miles in our front, has just informed me that the enemy have appeared on the heights above Fort Edward in considerable force, and that from these movements he judges an attack will be made to day. Loth as I am that a general engagement should ensue, and that I will take every prudent measure to prevent it, it is not impossible but it may take place, and as the fate of every person engaged in it is uncertain, as I shall certainly be there, and in order to inspirit my troops shall expose myself more than it is prudent for a commanding officer to do, I may possibly get rid of the cares of this life, or fall into their hands; in either case I entreat you to rescue my memory from that load of calumny that ever follows the unfortunate. My papers will

furnish you with sufficient materials, and I trust that the goodness of your heart will induce you to devote a part of your time to it. I leave this with my Secretary to be sent to you, if I shall not return. I am this moment going to mount. Adieu!

ENDORSED: To be sent if any accident should happen to me.

[No accident happened, but the letter was sent to Jay.]

Wm. Duer to Gen. Schuyler.

PHILADELPHIA, 29th July, 1777.

[EXTRACT.]

There is but one thing for you to do to establish your character on such a basis that even suspicion itself shall be silent, and in doing this, you will I am conscious follow the impulse of your own heart. From the nature of your department, and other unavoidable causes you have not during the course of this war had an opportunity of evincing that spirit which I and your more intimate friends know you to possess. Of this circumstance prejudice takes a cruel advantage, and malice lends an easy ear to her dictates. You will not I am sure see this place till your conduct gives the lie to this insinuation, as it has done before to every other which your enemies have so industriously circulated.—Rev. Papers, 355-357.

Extract of a letter from Gen. Schuyler to Wm. Duer, dated

ALBANY, August 8, 1777.

"The scoundrels that doubt my personal fortitude dare not put it to the trial."—
Revolutionary Papers, 373.

Col. Udney Hay to Geo. Clinton.

STILLWATER, August 13, 1777.

SIR:

I lament I cannot give your Excellency a better account of things here. Misfortunes and fatigue have broken down the discipline and spirits of the troops

and converted them in a great degree into a rabble. They seem to have lost all confidence in themselves and their leaders. The militia seem to be infected with the same spirit. Such as are with us are good for nothing but to eat and waste and grumble, and those at home think home safest. When I tell you that the sight of twenty or thirty Indians on our flank or rear, fills the whole camp with alarm, and that the act of shooting one from behind the walls of a log cabin has been commemorated in General Orders as a proof of great gallantry, your Excellency will be able to judge of what will probably happen, if by any accident we are brought into close contact with Burgoyne's veterans. But of such an event there is little danger. We first collected at Fort Edward, but quickly left that for a strong position on Moses' Creek. The Indians soon made this uncomfortable, when we removed here and began a fortified camp, but here we are not safe, and I am under orders for another move. Van Schaick's Island is thought to be safe against the attacks of Indians, and there we go. Should he [Gates] not come soon, your Excellency may expect to hear that our Headquarters are removed to Albany.

[Collection of Papers, 431-433.]

Jas. Duane to Gen. Schuyler.

PHILAD. 23d Aug., 1777.

[EXTRACT.]

The change of command was founded merely on the representation of the Eastern States, that their militia suspicious of your military character, would not turn out in defense of New York while you presided in the Northern Department.

* * * * *

All your friends wish that fortune may put it in your power to give some signal proof of the only military talent which you have not evidenced in the course of your command for want of an opportunity.

In the correspondence which ensued with Mr. Bancroft I did not deem it necessary, in each case which

admitted of it, to show that the extract was qualified by the general tenor of the letter.

General Montgomery's familiar letter to his brother-in-law, written in 1775, before the army appointments were made, and speculating upon the fitness of the candidates, will hardly pass as the expression of an opinion.

The letter of Mr. Jay, of July 21st, 1777, is published at length in his life by his son, William Jay. It is a long and sympathizing letter, enumerating all the rumors in circulation as to the loss of Ticonderoga, to which I have previously referred.

If from this letter Mr. Bancroft can find any ground for imputing cowardice to General Schuyler, he would have much stronger reasons for accusing him of treason and dishonesty.

This also applies to several of the other extracts, when read in connection with the whole letters.

At this time, it seemed to me, that Mr. Bancroft must have been accidentally led to ignore all other rumors connected with the loss of Ticonderoga, while endeavoring to fasten this one as a permanent stain on General Schuyler's character. In this spirit I commented, as follows, upon what he advances as sufficient authority for his version :

NEW YORK, Dec. 28th, 1866.

HON. GEORGE BANCROFT,

DEAR SIR:

I have read with interest, in your last volume, the account of the Northern campaign of 1777, and am much disappointed at the conclusions you have arrived at in regard to the public services of my grandfather, General Schuyler.

I should not, of course, trouble you with any personal communication on that score. You have, however, by way of explaining his want of success, attacked his private character, hitherto unimpeached, attributing to him want of personal courage, the gravest charge which can be brought against a soldier.

It is but fair to assume that you have made this charge from a sense of duty, and based upon, what seems to you, conclusive evidence.

As the representative of General Schuyler, you cannot deem it unreasonable in me to ask you, at your earliest leisure, for access to the sources of information which have authorized you to make these broad statements to his dishonor.

Respectfully yours, &c.,

GEORGE L. SCHUYLER.

NEW YORK, Dec. 28th, 1866.

MY DEAR MR. SCHUYLER:

I this moment receive your letter of to-day. I think you cannot have read my volume with care. I represent the loss of Ticonderoga as that which must have taken place whoever had been in command; and I explain the diminution of General Schuyler's force as a consequence of the state of feeling between himself and the New England men. Were it anybody but one

like you, for whom I cherish a most sincere regard, I might decline anything that could lead to a private discussion of questions appertaining to history; but to you I prefer to say that if you will specify any passage of mine of the character which you indicates, I will endeavor to set before you grounds for the statement.

Very truly yours,
GEO. BANCROFT.

NEW YORK, Dec. 29th, 1866.

DEAR SIR:

The words which bear upon the private character of General Schuyler, referred to in my note of yesterday, are on pages 372 and 373 of your last volume.

"Anxious, and *suspected of a want of personal courage.*"

"His friends urged him to silence *the growing suspicion of his cowardice.*"

Page 374 you give an intimation that Washington shared in these views; but as the expression "want of fortitude" admits of a different construction, I confine myself, as stated in my note, to asking for the grounds on which you are satisfied to write of General Schuyler as a man suspected of want of personal courage.

Respectfully yours,
GEORGE L. SCHUYLER.

The same day I received from Mr. Bancroft the extracts already published.

NEW YORK, January 16th, 1867.

DEAR SIR:

Absence from New York has prevented me from acknowledging, at an earlier date, the receipt of your note of December 29th, and the documents accompanying it.

When I asked for the evidence upon which, in your History of the Campaign of 1777, you stamp the private character of General Schuyler as a man "suspected of want of personal courage," I did not propose to question the fact that reports to that effect were circulated in obscure or interested quarters.

He was, in like manner, suspected of frauds upon the Government; of treason to the national cause; of every minor offense that prejudice or malice could devise, by some who had private animosities to avenge, and by others who, in public life, were aiming at the removal of those generals who placed implicit confidence in the ability and patriotism of Washington; thus inaugurating a policy which was to culminate in the appointment of General Gates as Commander-in-Chief of the armies of the United States.

All of these charges which were brought forward with any semblance of authority were closely investigated and refuted. Most of them were withdrawn by the parties who made them.

A Committee of Inquiry of Congress made a report which placed the character of General Schuyler "higher than ever as an able and active commander, and a zealous and disinterested patriot."

When the charge of treason, with documents supposed amply to sustain it, was forwarded to General Washington, he thus writes to General Schuyler: "I look upon the charge against you with an eye of disbelief, and sentiments of detestation and abhorrence."

Of the vague rumors that want of personal courage was among the causes which influenced General Schuyler in his policy of retarding the advance of Burgoyne for more than two months to a progress of half a mile a day, until the enlistment of fresh troops enabled him, as he did, to take the offensive, no public notice appears ever to have been taken. His plan, approved by Washington, and sustained by all subsequent military criticism, except yours, when once understood, seems to have left

such rumors to fall to the ground. Nor am I aware that they were ever called up again during his after career.

This portion of your history appears nearly fifty years after the actors in the war of the Revolution have passed away. It is written in the narrative style; authorities are not referred to, but quotations of sentences are freely interpolated in the text; a method which gives force and weight to a paragraph, but dangerous as to the correctness of the impressions which may be produced.

Your conclusions, as you state in the preface, are the result of long study and investigation, and of a careful weighing of testimony as regards the public services and private character of those of whom you treat. When, therefore, you attribute to "want of personal courage" General Schuyler's management of the Campaign of 1777, no one who reads, can doubt that your impressions are based upon evidence of a most convincing kind. But if this is not the case; if, nearly a hundred years after the termination of his military career, such charges can be brought up against a commanding general, based only upon the camp gossip and partisan rumors of the day, what man's reputation is safe?

Who, of the generals ranking among the first in our late war of the rebellion, is not aware that his official conduct and his private character have both been assailed, at times, by ignorance, prejudice, or malice; that reports have been circulated which personal friends have commented upon with bitterness, urging him to refute them by word or deed, and yet who lives on with the firm assurance that, when the future historian shall examine calmly and without prejudice into his personal character and official career, they will not have a feather's weight in determining the position he is to hold in the estimation of succeeding generations?

Presuming, therefore, that you are acting upon fair and deliberate conviction, and after careful examination, the papers you

inclose to me, as giving the just grounds for the conclusions to which you have arrived, seem to me wholly insufficient. Many of them do not refer to his personal character at all, and those that do, only prove that such reports existed; that they were fostered by the political and private enemies of General Schuyler, to the great indignation of his personal friends, who treat them with contempt.

I shall refer to them generally. When General Montgomery, having learned that Carleton had completed his armed vessels at St. Johns, hastened to the Isle au Noix without orders, he knew, as you are aware, that General Schuyler was, by order of Congress, attending a Conference of the Six Nations at Albany. He felt the importance of his presence, as the campaign was about to open. Their personal relations were of the warmest kind. General Montgomery, than whom no braver man lived, always leaned upon the support of General Schuyler for his greater powers of organization, as well as for his indefatigable spirit and energy. You are also aware that General Schuyler did join him immediately upon the receipt of his letter, though suffering under illness of the most excruciating character.

The letter you inclose from General Montgomery is not the whole letter, or a continuous extract from it. Your clerk, in transcribing it, has omitted the closing words of the last sentence. He ends his extract with these words: "Be assured I have your honor and reputation much at heart;" but the sentence is as follows: "Be assured I have your honor and reputation much at heart, *as of the greatest consequence to the public service;*—that all my ambition is to do my duty in a subordinate capacity, without the least ungenerous intention of lessening that merit so justly your due, and which I omit no opportunity of setting in its fullest light." General Montgomery was no hypocrite.

I find nothing in this letter, or in anything said or written by General Montgomery, which even alludes to the question of General Schuyler's personal courage. Their relations were close

and warm up to the glorious end of Montgomery's career. They were both "suspected of want of skill and bravery" by rumors attributed to General Wooster (though subsequently denied by him to be true), and each did all in his power to encourage and support the other, under the load of difficulties, caused by malice and insubordination, which tried them almost beyond power of endurance.

The sneers of Samuel Adams fall harmlessly to the ground when he insinuates of General Schuyler what he does of Washington, criticising his "Fabian policy" as being caused by want of proper spirit, and when he launches forth in praises of the honesty, truth and courage of Gates, "the man of his choice."*

All that he says of General Schuyler's ignorance of the whereabouts of St. Clair, after his flight from Ticonderoga, and his insinuations as to General Schuyler's not being where he could give an account of that affair, of course have no weight in forming your opinion, as a very few days sufficed, after that letter was written, to explain the reasons, which are well known to you.

I almost think that General Schuyler's letter to John Jay has been sent to me by mistake.

When near the prospect of a general engagement, which he desires, if possible, to prevent,—(he had but 4500 men, regulars and militia included, to oppose to the whole army of Burgoyne,)—at the same time, if it does occur, feeling there is a necessity, "with a smaller and dispirited force, for him to expose himself more than is customary for a commanding officer to do," it does not seem to me unmanly in General Schuyler to confide this to

* The biographer of Samuel Adams thus comments upon the result of his persevering and successful efforts in Congress to obtain General Schuyler's removal:

"Time has removed from General Schuyler all blame in the disasters, and the investigation of his conduct resulted in his honorable acquittal. The substitution of Gates gave to the country a General who was in no respect superior to Schuyler, than whom a braver or more trustworthy patriot never lived."

a most intimate personal friend, and to request him, in case of accident, to take charge of his papers, and relieve his memory from "that load of calumny that ever follows the unfortunate." On the contrary, it seems to me to show that at such a time it was not fear of death, but of the loss of reputation, dearer to him than life, which was uppermost in General Schuyler's thoughts and feelings.

The letter of Colonel Udney Hay to George Clinton is but an ignorant criticism of the plan of a campaign which he did not comprehend, while the letter of Mr. Duer refers to the malicious reports in circulation after the loss of Ticonderoga, apparently to assure General Schuyler how much they provoke, but how little they move, him and others of his personal friends.

Had you deemed it worth while to have copied for my use *the whole* of this letter as published in Irving's History (Vol. iii., p. 182), the bearing of your extract, as in the case of General Montgomery's letter, would have been better understood.

The partial extracts of letters of Jay and Duane show still more clearly that these reports are fomented by personal and political foes, who endeavor to keep themselves out of sight.

Well may General Schuyler say, in his reply to Mr. Duer, "The scoundrels who doubt my personal fortitude dare not put it to the trial."

On the other hand, the whole tenor of General Schuyler's character and pursuits seems to be at variance with the conclusions you have drawn from these very slight premises. He was descended from a family which, from the first settlement of the Colony, ever bore an active and honorable part in the savage warfare which characterized the contests of those days, when small bodies of men met in close conflict, and when battles were more especially lost or won by the personal bearing of those who were engaged in them.

In that region, between the lakes and the upper waters of the Hudson, appropriately styled "the bloody ground" of the Col-

ony of New York, there is scarcely a district where he could not point to the grave of an ancestor, or to some record of their unflinching energy in victory or defeat. This may appear to you irrelevant, but it ought, and does, have its weight when we are called upon to believe that a man with such antecedents should have so basely degenerated in heart, while he apparently followed so closely in the footsteps of his ancestors, making war the profession of his choice, when there was but little inducement for a native of the Colony to enter the service of the British army.

At eighteen years of age he embarked in those expeditions among the Indians of the Six Nations, which were always customary with his family, when he obtained that influence over them, afterward so important in the war of the Revolution, an influence based in part upon his reputation for truth and justice; but of far more weight with that rude and warlike race was his wide-spread renown for activity, firmness, and contempt of danger.

He served in the old French war as a captain, under Colonel Bradstreet, one of the bravest and most adventurous of the commanders of the time. He was by his side through a severe fight of unequal numbers on the Oswego River, and there had an occasion for displaying qualities of humanity which savor little of want of self-confidence or courage.

"When it became necessary to abandon the island to meet the enemy, advancing in large numbers on the shore of the river, there being but one batteau, already overloaded, the soldiers refused, on the score of safety, to receive in it a wounded soldier of the enemy. Captain Schuyler, handing his weapons and coat to a companion, bore the wounded man to the water, swam with him on his back across the deep channel, placed him in the hands of a surgeon, and joined his command in time to lead them in the severe fight which followed, and which ended in the repulse of the enemy."

With General Bradstreet he maintained the closest personal relations, which lasted through life. So also with Lord Viscount Howe, who fell at Ticonderoga. With all his brother officers, after the peace of 1763, he held a place utterly incompatible with any suspicion as to his wanting personal courage.

His subsequent career as a member of the Colonial Legislature, and of various other public bodies, was marked by a boldness and independence which often put both his moral and personal courage to the proof.

When a frightened and pliant legislature, composed almost exclusively of men of wealth and high standing, strove to crush the somewhat violent remonstrances of the advocates of popular rights by proposing measures to detect and imprison the authors of them, he alone stood up for their rights; and the sole negative vote on the record, in their behalf, is that of Philip Schuyler.

Private letters show that he was ready, if necessary, to respond to the custom of his time, which required personal satisfaction to be given for real or supposed injuries, and from which no family has suffered more than his own; a custom now almost generally condemned, but the observance of which was then deemed indispensable.

When subsequently appointed a Major-General in the Army of the United States, the only period of his life to which the rumors now under consideration refer, it is difficult to discriminate between the personal character of the man and his public services as a commanding officer; the latter being a subject from which, in this correspondence, I purposely refrain.

As against the rumors, however, upon which your conclusions are founded, I am satisfied to rest General Schuyler's reputation as a man of courage, upon general grounds. If a person so situated has been *wanting* in courage, it is generally not difficult to establish the fact; but it is not always easy to prove positively

the reverse, unless circumstances have afforded an exceptional opportunity in the case of a general officer to do so.

General Schuyler has now been dead more than sixty years. Sufficient time has elapsed to form an impartial estimate of his private character, as well as of his public services. Whatever may be thought of the latter, no man until now has publicly impugned the former. Many have borne their testimony to its worth, embracing in that tribute their sense of his "fiery spirit" as one of its prominent attributes.

Daniel Webster said to me, upon a social occasion, "When a life of your grandfather is to be published, I should like to write a preface. I was brought up with New England prejudices against him, but I consider him as second only to Washington in the services he rendered to the country in the war of the Revolution. His zeal and devotion to the cause, under difficulties which would have paralyzed the efforts of most men, and his fortitude and courage when assailed by malicious attacks upon his public and private character, *every one of which was proved to be false*, have impressed me with a strong desire to express publicly my sense of his great qualities."

Chief Justice Kent, writing of General Schuyler, says: "In acuteness of intellect, profound thought, indefatigable activity, exhaustless energy, pure patriotism, and *persevering and intrepid public efforts*, he had no superior."

The campaigns of 1775 and 1777 are treated by Washington Irving much more in detail than they are by you. You are well aware how differently he judges of the public services of General Schuyler from yourself; and surely no one could have a quicker or more refined perception than Mr. Irving of all that was noble or contemptible in any man's private character. His pages beam throughout with warm expressions of his high esteem for General Schuyler as a soldier and a man. I may also say that Mr. Irving frequently

expressed to me in conversation his appreciation of General Schuyler in terms almost identical with those used by Mr. Webster.

General Schuyler lived twenty years after the war, quite long enough for all matters of a personal character to be scrutinized and determined. He took an active part in politics; and at no period of our country's history were rival partisans more bitter and personal. Yet no one ever brought up, in the excitement of party strife, these rumors against his reputation, started during the war. They were deemed so idle, and were considered so amply refuted, as to have no longer a place in men's minds or memories.

With all the companions of his military life—with Washington, Lafayette, and other surviving leaders, as well as with those who served under him, or were a part of his military family, to whom his personal military character was thoroughly known, he ever preserved the most intimate personal relations—relations wholly incompatible with any suspicion *on their part* that he had ever been deficient in personal courage. As he advanced in years, that respect for his personal character appears to have increased. He was the friend and adviser of Hamilton, and though a bitter political opponent of Jefferson, the latter was a visitor at his house, and consulted with him upon questions of finance. He died with the conviction, shared until now by his family and friends, that whatever estimate the future historian might place upon his capacity as a public servant, his private character was beyond the reach of cavil or of blame.

I do not think, as against this general record of his life, the grounds you rely upon for an opposite conclusion are sound. I feel justified in asking you to reconsider your opinion; and should you find occasion to change it, so far as to admit that the charge of "suspicion of want of personal courage" had no more ground for belief than those other charges which were

publicly inquired into and refuted, that you will, in justice to General Schuyler's memory, publish a note to that effect in the preface to your next forthcoming volume.

Respectfully yours, &c.,

GEORGE L. SCHUYLER.

HON. GEORGE BANCROFT,
21st Street, New York.

NEW YORK, Feb. 4th, 1867.

DEAR SIR:

Excuse me for reminding you that my communication of January 16th ended with a request.

May I ask you, at your earliest convenience, to inform me of your decision in regard to it.

Respectfully yours, &c.,

GEORGE L. SCHUYLER.

HON. GEORGE BANCROFT,
17 West 21st Street, New York.

NEW YORK, February 5th, 1867.

DEAR SIR:

If your views of the duty of a historian coincide in any degree with mine, you will on second thought agree with me that he ought never to settle in advance with the representative of a family the terms in which he should speak of any member of that family who has played a public part. My next volume

will make honorable mention of the public services of General Schuyler; but what I shall say of him I cannot communicate to you now. This is so obviously the dictate of propriety, that it must meet your approval.

In reference to any reasonings or documents which you may communicate to me, they will receive my most respectful and impartial consideration.

As to the special point on which you have written to me, we are not so far apart as some phrases in your letter would seem to imply. We are agreed that General Schuyler was removed from the Northern command at the end of the summer of 1777, by an almost unanimous vote of the States in Congress, notwithstanding that New York had at that time in its delegation friends of Schuyler thoroughly skilled in parliamentary tactics. We are also agreed that the change of command was founded, not on the odium which attended the losing of Ticonderoga, but merely on the representation of the Eastern States that their militia, suspicious of his military character, would not turn out in defence of New York while he presided in the Northern Department. But whether the men thus suspicious, in Congress or out of Congress, were in the right, or were simply mistaken, or were such as deserve to be called by so harsh an epithet as scoundrels, is a point on which I have expressed no opinion; and where I refer in words of my own to the antipathy which existed between Schuyler and the New England troops, I call it, in words carefully chosen, "a not wholly unreasonable aversion" on their part. Nay, more, though I believe Schuyler himself, at a later day, declared Congress to have acted wisely in superseding him, I have nowhere said so; but have simply narrated the events as they happened.

I sometimes think you have never read my volume. High praise is awarded to Schuyler as an officer and as a man. On page 200, for example, I speak of him as a military com-

mander ever on the alert, and doing the right thing, and a most important thing, at the right moment, and from his own impulse, leaving the reader to contrast his conduct with that of Gates under similar circumstances. And again, on page 338, he is described as one who loved his country more than rank or fortune.

Yours respectfully,

GEO. BANCROFT.

NEW YORK, Feb. 9th, 1867.

DEAR SIR:

Your note of the 5th instant is received. As connected with the special point on which I have written to you, namely, General Schuyler's want of personal courage, you introduce as new matter the circumstances connected with his removal from the command of the Northern Army, upon which you say that we agree. There are, however, several statements to which I do not agree. I refer to them in their order:

Whether the vote for the removal of General Schuyler (August 1st, 1777) was nearly unanimous or not, I have no means of ascertaining. The "yeas and nays" for any resolution in Congress were called, for the first time in its history, on the 8th of August, one week later. The resolution, as it appears upon the journal, reads as follows: Resolved, That Major-General Schuyler be directed to repair to head-quarters. That General Washington be directed to order such General Officer as he shall think proper, to repair immediately to the Northern Department to relieve Major-General Schuyler in his command there.

General Washington declined taking any part in this business.

In a letter to Congress (August 3d) "he desires to be excused from making any appointment to the command of the Northern Army."

It was upon the receipt of this letter that General Gates (as stated in your last volume) was appointed, by the vote of eleven states.

That the adherents of General Gates, in and out of Congress, made large use of "the want of confidence of the militia of the Eastern States in General Schuyler's military character," is certainly true; but that such want of confidence was in any way connected with suspicions of his lack of personal courage remains to be shown. I find no evidence of it in any quarter entitled to consideration.

You are, I think, mistaken in assuming that General Schuyler's harsh epithet of "Scoundrels" was applied to any persons, in or out of Congress, who openly criticised his military character. The letter of Mr. Duer, in answer to which he uses that expression, refers to the hints and sneers of malicious individuals—not to any outspoken manly attacks; and to such persons the epithet justly applies.

I was not aware that General Schuyler, at a later day, declared Congress to have acted wisely in superseding him; but if so, he certainly did not thereby indorse the idea that his want of personal courage was questioned, by his removal.

Upon the petition of six General Officers of the Northern Army, Congress requested him to remain with them, after being deprived of his command. He did remain, even under such trying circumstances, and was present when Burgoyne laid down his arms on his own grounds, amid the smouldering ruins of his home, which the latter had so wantonly destroyed.

If the action of Congress in removing General Schuyler from his command can be brought forward as bearing upon

his personal character, the subsequent action of the same body upon the subject of his resignation, should be entitled to some weight in arriving at a conclusion.

On the 5th of March, 1779, more than eighteen months after his removal from an active command, General Schuyler sent in his resignation to Congress. On the 8th of March it was moved that it be accepted. To this an amendment was offered in the following words: "Resolved, That the President be directed to inform General Schuyler that Congress are very desirous of retaining him in the service, especially in the present situation of affairs; but if the state of his health is such as that he judges it absolutely necessary to retire, Congress, though reluctantly, will acquiesce and admit his resignation."

This amendment *was rejected* by a vote of eleven out of the twelve states represented, to give place to the following resolution, which *was carried* (against the votes of New England and Pennsylvania): "Resolved, That the President be directed to acquaint Major-General Schuyler that the situation of the army renders it inconvenient to accept his resignation, and therefore *Congress cannot comply with his request.*"

Would it have been possible to pass such a resolution were there even a suspicion of General Schuyler's want of personal courage?

A part of this, however, seems foreign to the subject of this correspondence; and referring back to the commencement of your note, I see that I have failed to explain, with sufficient clearness, my position in addressing you.

I have no desire to settle in advance the terms upon which, as an historian, you should speak of General Schuyler in your forthcoming volume; nor do I conceive myself entitled to question you personally (except to ask for authorities) upon what you have already said about his public services. For this you are open to criticism through the usual channels, and this much

I expressed in my first note, asking you for the grounds upon which you speak of General Schuyler "as a man wanting in personal courage."

Such a charge, you are well aware, is a criminal charge—against a soldier—more disgraceful to him in the world's estimation, than any other that can be brought forward, however base or contemptible. Upon conviction, the rules of war punish it with death; and society enshrouds its victim with a pall of obloquy which never can be raised. A charge made in this careful and deliberate manner during General Schuyler's lifetime must irretrievably have destroyed, publicly and socially, either him or the person who made it—the one if the position was made good—the other if he failed in the proof.

Whatever my personal feelings may be, I have endeavored to keep them out of sight, in this correspondence. I have assumed that in your desire to delineate the noble traits of Washington's character, and especially his watchful supervision of the interests of the whole country, you have been induced, if not to speak more disparagingly of others than they deserve, at least to use language that grates more harshly on the ear than you really intended.

The same cause has doubtless had its effect upon some of your general statements. I will cite two instances: Page 373 you say of General Schuyler, "His friends urged him to silence the growing suspicion of his cowardice; he answered, 'If there is a battle I shall certainly expose myself more than is prudent.'" His answer to those insinuations has been already given in the extract of his letter to Mr. Duer. The words you quote as his reply appear to be made up from portions of his letter to Mr. Jay upon a very different occasion, and not in reply to any communication.

On the next page you say: "Alarmed by Schuyler's want of fortitude, he (Washington) ordered to the North, Arnold, who was fearless," etc.

It seems hardly necessary to place that construction upon an order of General Washington, arising *from a request of General Schuyler* to send him an active and spirited officer to drill his raw militia.

For these reasons, and because the papers you have sent me, as well as the allusions in your last note to the action of Congress, do not seem to justify the conclusions you have drawn, I had hoped—and still hope—that you may be disposed to reconsider them; and if favorably, I have supposed that you would prefer yourself to apply the remedy.

The method I have suggested relieves me also from the necessity of any public notice of your statement, which I greatly desire to avoid. It does not apply, as you seem to think, to what is to be, but to what has been written in your history. I cannot see how it in the least impinges upon your dignity as an author or a historian, to inform me definitely of your intentions in regard to it; or to say, as I must again respectfully ask of you to do, whether you are willing to take any action in the matter at all, in this or any other way.

Respectfully yours, etc.,

GEORGE L. SCHUYLER.

On the 15th of April I addressed the following note to Mr. Bancroft :

NEW YORK, April 15th, 1867.

HON. GEORGE BANCROFT,

SIR: Much time has elapsed since my last communication, in which I ask whether you intend to take any action on the subject of our correspondence.

By your silence I can only infer that I have failed to convince you that you are called upon to do so. I have no alternative but to deny publicly the correctness of your account of General Schuyler's character for courage, which I can view in no other light than a gratuitous insult.

I shall, unless you object, make use of this correspondence—partly because it

covers so much of the matter at issue, and also as showing that, in the first place, I sought redress from you privately, by a personal appeal to your sense of justice.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

GEORGE L. SCHUYLER.

To which I received the following reply :

NEW YORK, April 15th, 1867.

SIR: Your letter of this day is received. It remains my unalterable purpose to use any document or argument which you may present with perfect impartiality, and also not to communicate to you in advance—least of all under a menace—what I may have to say of your ancestor in my next volume.

With the letters you have addressed to me you must do what you please; but they neither present my statements fairly, nor refute them, and so far as General Schuyler is concerned, they neither offer the best excuse for his failures—for he, like other men, had failures—nor do they present the strongest testimonies of the general esteem in which his virtues as a civilian and a citizen were held.

The tone of your note to-day shows conclusively how proper it was for me to decline entering into a correspondence with you, on a subject which you can hardly be expected to consider with the critical calmness of a disinterested inquirer.

I remain yours,

GEORGE BANCROFT.

I have published all the communications which have taken place between us, to show that, in the first place, I asked for nothing but the grounds upon which Mr. Bancroft made one particular charge against General Schuyler; and also that I confined my remarks in writing to him, as far as possible, to that one point. At the close of my letter of February 9th, I distinctly

state that what I ask of him refers to what has been, and not to what is to be, written.

In my note of April 15th, written to know whether he objects to my publishing the correspondence between us, there is no menace. It merely refers to the alternative I had already announced as incumbent upon me, if no action were taken by him.

That my communications to Mr. Bancroft are far from being what I should like them to be, I am well aware. I have neither the ability, the knowledge, nor the facility in writing which would enable me to cope with him, had I attempted to enter the field of history in my wish to excuse General Schuyler's failures. But I have attempted nothing of the kind. In endeavoring to defend his memory against the one charge of cowardice, I certainly have not, as Mr. Bancroft truly, though ironically says, "brought forward the strongest testimonies of the general esteem in which his virtues as a civilian and a citizen were held;" but it would not be a very difficult task to do so, if it had any special bearing upon the subject at issue between us.

Some other qualities besides learning and diligence are essential to complete the character of a successful historian. When his materials are collected and his intellect has been brought to bear upon them, unless

treated with candor, fairness and truth, his labor will be in vain. He should have some qualities of heart, as well as of the head. He should, at least, be capable of comprehending the feelings and motives of men greater than himself—of distinguishing the true from the false, and of having some sympathy for generous and unselfish natures. He must have, at all events, sufficient sense of honor to save him from the temptation of advocating his favorite theories in violation of the spirit, if not the letter, of truth.

Such are the attributes of Marshall, Prescott, Washington Irving, Motley, and other American writers, whose opinions carry conviction from the elevated characters of the men who advance them.

It remains to be seen what place will be accorded to Mr. Bancroft, when his work is completed, upon this roll of honored names.

In the few pages which Mr. Bancroft has devoted to a criticism of the Campaign of 1777 and the character of General Schuyler, he has, in my judgment, given false impressions to the future student of history, by omission of what is important to know, and by an unfair application of historical facts.

While expatiating largely, elsewhere, upon the inefficiency of Congress, and its positive inability to furnish

men, money, provisions, and military stores to General Washington's army, the reader might suppose that General Schuyler labored under no such difficulties. Gordon says: "On the day of the engagement at Hubbarton (July 7th) General Schuyler was obliged to strip the men at Fort Edward, to send to the troops at Fort Anne, by which his own men were left without lead for some days, except a mere trifle from Albany, obtained by stripping the windows. At this period he had not above 700 Continentals and not above twice that number of militia, and could not furnish small cannon sufficient for a couple of little schooners on Lake George."

No mention is made of his great and successful exertions in obtaining supplies, or of his prompt action in retarding the progress of Burgoyne after the evacuation of Ticonderoga by General St. Clair—the main cause of the success of a campaign which, for the importance of its results, has been ranked among the seven great battles of the world.

His firmness in detailing from his small force a strong party for the relief of Fort Stanwix, contrary to the decision of a council of officers, and with a new cry of treason raised against him for so doing, is not alluded to.

His proposal to General Washington that Southern troops should be used at the North for the purpose of promoting a national instead of a sectional spirit in the army, is represented as arising from a mean and commonplace hatred of New England men, without any reference to the principal cause of the difficulty, which arose from the unsettled relations of the States to the National Congress; from the unwillingness of the soldiers to be commanded by any but officers from their own States, and to the impatience of the militia, who, when called into service, found themselves compelled to submit to the discipline of an army—to work as well as to fight.

Nowhere is justice more freely rendered to General Schuyler in regard to sectional difficulties, misapprehended at the time, than at this day in the New England States; and from no other quarter have I received such severe comments upon Mr. Bancroft's estimate of General Schuyler's character.

While exposing, elsewhere, the conduct of General Charles Lee, of Gates, and others, toward Washington, who, as Mr. Bancroft says, "was surrounded by officers willing to fill the ears of members of Congress with clamor against his management," no reference is made to General Schuyler's hearty and cheerful co-operation

and compliance with every suggestion from the Commander-in-Chief.

He has no word for General Schuyler's devotion to his country when, deprived of his command in the moment of victory, he continued to serve under his successor, who reaped before his eyes the laurels which had been destined for him.

"Though sensible," he says in his letter to Congress, "of the indignity of being ordered from the command of the army at the time when an engagement must soon take place," yet at the same time he writes to General Washington, "I shall go on in doing my duty and endeavoring to deserve your esteem."

In the Capitol of the Nation, at Washington, is a picture by Trumbull of the surrender of Burgoyne, of interest as preserving the likenesses of those who were present at the scene. In this numerous assemblage of soldiers, but one figure is represented in citizen's dress. It is that of General Schuyler, to whom the sympathetic nature of an artist thus pays a passing tribute.

These omissions, or some of them, tend to obscure the true position of the parties concerned in the Campaign of 1777. There are, at the same time, statements which give impressions not warranted by the facts.

In answer to a remark like this: "Meantime the British were never *harried* by the troops with Schuyler," premising that Mr. Bancroft himself gives the numbers under Burgoyne as "7500 choice men, exclusive of Indians, with the most complete supply of artillery ever furnished to an army," it is worth while to read the army roll of General Schuyler at that time, twenty days after the battle of Hubbardton previously referred to:

July 27th. Continental troops, 2700.

MILITIA.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT.

One major, one captain, two lieutenants, two ensigns, one adjutant, one quartermaster, six sergeants, one drummer, *six sick, three rank and file*—the rest deserted.

STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS.

Berkshire County.—Somewhat more than 200 are left.

Hampshire County.—Colonel Moseby's regiment, *ten or twelve* left.

STATE OF NEW YORK.

County of Albany.—1050 left.

This being his force on the 27th, on or about the 29th of July General Schuyler thought proper to fall

back to Saratoga, which Mr. Bancroft comments upon as follows :

"The courage of the commander being gone, his officers and his army became spiritless, and, as his only resource, he solicited aid from Washington with *unreasoning importunity*."

Even as late as August 4th, he makes the following return : "4000 Continental troops—if men, one-third of whom are negroes, boys, and men too aged for field, or indeed any other service, can be called troops—and 1500 militia."

Mr. Bancroft quotes portions of private letters which speak despondingly of the state of affairs, as a proof that the writers are either untrue to the cause, or else that they betoken cowardice.

I am not surprised that he does not appreciate the fact that some men can look their position in the face, even in the direst extremity, without flinching from duty ; but I am surprised at his inconsistency in bringing forward such extracts as evidence of weakness in Greene, or timidity in Schuyler, when he makes them, and justly, too, the ground of sympathy for others. "Such is my situation (says Washington privately), that if I were to wish the bitterest curse to an enemy on this side of the grave, I should put him in my stead

with my feelings." Again, writing to Congress, he says : "Give me leave to say your affairs are in a more unpromising way than you seem to apprehend. Your army is on the eve of dissolution,"—and more to the same effect.

General Montgomery, whose courage and patriotism are fully appreciated by a grateful country, writes to General Schuyler : "I am exceedingly well pleased to see Mr. Wooster here, both for the advantage of the service and upon my own account, for I most earnestly request to be suffered to retire should matters stand on such a footing this winter as to permit me to go off with honor. I have not talents or temper for such a command. I am under the disagreeable necessity of acting eternally out of character—to wheedle, flatter and lie. I stand in a constrained attitude. I will bear with it for a short time, but I cannot support it long."

Perhaps some future Bancroft, regardless of General Montgomery's established fame, may venture to speak of him as "anxious," and suspected of grave moral delinquencies.

But I refrain from further criticisms. While it devolves upon me to defend General Schuyler's personal character, I am sensible that it is more becoming to leave to others, not of his family, the vindication of his public career.

It may be said that the omissions of which I complain are of details not entitled to a place in so general a history ; but it is because Mr. Bancroft himself has, for no very obvious reason, even if it were true, fastened upon General Schuyler the imputation of cowardice, that I deem it unfair to withhold what, otherwise, he would not be called upon to mention.

"The best historians of later times have been seduced from truth, not by their imagination, but by their reason. Unhappily, they have fallen into the error of distorting facts to suit general principles. They arrive at a theory from looking at some of the phenomena, and the remaining phenomena they strain or curtail to suit the theory. For this purpose, it is not necessary that they should assert what is absolutely false. In every human character and transaction there is a mixture of good and evil ; a little exaggeration, a little suppression, a judicious use of epithets, a watchful and searching skepticism with respect to the evidence on one side, a convenient credulity with respect to every report or tradition on the other, may easily make a saint of Laud or a tyrant of Henry the Fourth."

These words of Macaulay describe a method of writing history which seems admirably suited to Mr.

Bancroft's temperament, and of which he has largely availed himself.

In the preface to this volume, Mr. Bancroft announces himself "as alone responsible for what he has written." Whatever significance may, at one time, have attached itself to this expression, I consider it as meaning, in his case, that his character as a gentleman, and his general standing with the community, challenge any question as to the purity of his motives.

Of Mr. Bancroft's own estimate of himself in these respects we have some evidence in the poetical effusion which closes his letter in reply to Greene, published in the last number of the *North American Review* :

"Thou, notwithstanding, all deceit removed,
See the whole vision he made manifest;
And let them wince who have their withers wrung.
What, though, when tasted first, thy voice shall prove
Unwelcome; on digestion, it will turn
To vital nourishment."

I do not find, however, so much lofty disinterestedness as these lines would imply, is conceded to him by others.

In his political career, his course has not been very generally considered the result of pure conviction through principle, nor is the estimate placed upon him by those who have known him the longest and most

intimately, such as would warrant the assumption of merit which he evidently thinks his due.

If I may be permitted to define the much-abused term of "gentleman," as describing a man who, while jealous and tenacious of his own dignity and personal rights, is equally careful and tender of those of others, and who, under no circumstances, can be tempted to the commission of a mean or unworthy action, it may admit of question whether Mr. Bancroft's character will bear the test.

When, in his note to me of February 5th, he expresses surprise at my feelings, because in other parts of his work he gives praise to General Schuyler, it is clear that he cannot appreciate how deeply the epithet of cowardice shocks the sensibilities of honorable men.

When General Washington, in his memorial to Congress, expresses a strong wish that the appointment of officers should be given to "gentlemen," Mr. Bancroft deems it necessary to devote a page to explain away and palliate the use of the word. He speaks of General Schuyler's "social position," as if that were a drawback to his merit.

By these poor bids for popularity, at the expense of dignity, he shows that weakness of a common nature which cannot take in the true spirit of the American

people, who then, as now, cordially recognize the superior advantages of culture and refinement in those who are true to the greater responsibilities and the broader duties to humanity they entail upon their possessors.

I hope I shall not be considered as transgressing the bounds of propriety in making these remarks in a matter which, as between me, the representative of General Schuyler, and Mr. Bancroft, is of a personal nature.

In my correspondence with him I endeavored to keep in the background my own outraged feelings, assuming that if I could convince him of error, he would be ready to acknowledge, and himself to remedy it.

Though I have failed in this, it seems to me that the most casual reader will find nothing in the documents Mr. Bancroft has submitted to me which justifies what he has written.

On the other hand, I believe that those who are familiar with the state of public opinion just after the evacuation of Ticonderoga, and who have read at full length those letters of General Schuyler's friends, written to him at that time, (extracts from which form more than half of Mr. Bancroft's authorities,) will be at a loss to conjecture what motive has induced him to venture so far on such an unstable basis.

No one of a true and manly spirit would charge another with cowardice, unless upon incontestable proof. Even then the instincts of a gentleman would make him shrink from bringing it forward, unless compelled thereto by its bearing upon others, or by the requirements of history. This, however, Mr. Bancroft has done, and has given it the large circulation of his history.

To those few who feel sufficient interest in the personal character of General Schuyler to read my protest against this wanton insult to his memory, I deem it my duty to point out, to this extent, the relative positions in the estimation of their contemporaries, of the accuser and the accused.

The complete life of General Schuyler is yet to be published. In the meantime I look without much apprehension upon this attempt of Mr. Bancroft to deprive him of the reputation of a brave and unselfish patriot—a reputation hitherto accorded to him by his countrymen, based upon the verdict of historians whose names are honored and whose works are destined to live.

GEORGE L. SCHUYLER,

6 East 14th street.

NEW YORK, April 16th, 1867.

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M. F.